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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – April 2010

Faculty Senators

University of South Alabama

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
Faculty Senate

April 21, 2010
Library Auditorium
3:00 pm

Minutes

Attending: Adams, Gubler-Hanna, Spector, Carr, Connors, Dardeau, Fisher, Guzy, Haywick, Hillman, Lunceford, Marshall, Moore, Roddy, Shaw, Shelly-Tremblay, Langan, Kingman, McCormick, Byrd, Campbell, Davidson-Shivers, Adams, Omar, Finley, Lemley, Nero, Grishko, Kahn, Kaulfers, Martinko, Rachek, Rusyniak, Madden, Retzlaff-Roberts, D. Turnipseed, Keasler

Also Present: Amy Prendergast, outgoing chair of the Evaluation Committee
John Sachs, past President
Kelly Woodford, past Secretary recording minutes

1. Call to order at 3:05 (without quorum)

2. Approval of minutes from the March meeting

When quorum was reached at 3:10, motion was made to approve March minutes. The motion was seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Chair's report - D. Turnipseed

Constitutional Amendment

During the 2009-2010 Senate year, we attempted to make changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution. Despite door-to-door efforts, less than 50% of the faculty has voted. The votes cast overwhelmingly favored the amendments. Our failure to even get 50% of the faculty to cast a ballot underscores the need for change. Moreover, the lack of a quorum ten minutes into the first meeting of the year underscores the need for the successorship change. People have had to roll off the Senate who are willing to serve.

University Budget

There is a flat budget projected from the state. We may make it through the rest of this fiscal year without additional state proration. However, we are still down \$10 million and there will be no federal stimulus money next year. We may escape the blood bath experienced by our colleagues in other states – if the economy continues to turn around.

Recognition of John Sachs, Past Chair

The Past Chair of the Faculty Senate, John Sachs, was recognized and presented with a plaque.

4. Old Business

a. Status of Voting on Amendments to Faculty Senate Constitution

See Chair's Report

5. New Business

a. Transfer of Chair position from D. Turnipseed (MCOB) to J. Connors (A&S)

Jim Connors recognized the work of D. Turnipseed during the last year. He set goals at the beginning of the year and accomplished what he set out to do. He has raised the profile and

impression of the Senate. We did not know how the faculty would react to football, but, thanks to David's efforts, we have had good feedback from students and the administration for the strong faculty showing of support.

David brought with him some "outside" ideas from his Senate days at his prior employer. I do not have a long history in academia; I come from private business. When you have a closed system without outside input, organizations have issues. As David recognized, we have a remarkably outdated Faculty Senate Constitution. I want to create an ad hoc committee to review the document to develop a workable, fixed Constitution, along with a more flexible, changeable set of bylaws. My goal is to present a proposal at the Fall Faculty meeting I will be looking for volunteers who are willing to work with me on this project.

Who am I? I am a geologist in the Department of Earth Sciences. I am an alum of USA – B.S. in the early 80's and a Ph.D. in Marine Sciences. I spent 25 years in business as a consulting geologist. I've struggled with the transition to academia; so I will bring a little of that perspective to our meetings. Things work at a different pace in academia. Maybe we can come up with a way to stimulate things a little more.

My goals:

1. Review our governance and governing documents.
2. Try to make USA more faculty-focused.

That idea comes from Russ Lea, who recently said there are 2 types of schools: those that are faculty focuses and those that are student focused. USA is student focused. We need to work towards making this a more faculty focused university where the faculty has a voice and get to do what we came to academia to do. I spend most of my time filling in forms, not teaching; and I did not come to academia to fill in forms. I would like to push back on the administrative side. Some of you are in education – we've seen what has happened in the public schools. What teachers do ia lot more administration, and lot less teaching. I was trying to get away from administrative work when I cam here to teach. I think we can move that way without a full scale revolt if we begin to push back.

Nominations and Elections of Faculty Senate Officers

- b. Election of Vice-Chair/Chair elect

A description of the job was given.

Nominee: No volunteers were forthcoming.

The position was tabled until the next meeting.

- c. Election of Secretary

Nominee: Julie Estis (AHP)

No additional nominees.

Elected unanimously.

Nominations & Elections of Executive Committee Members:

- d. Election of Chair of the Technology Committee

Nominees: Diane Keasler (Nursing)

Tom Meyer (Nursing)

No Additional nominees.

Diane Keasler was elected with a majority of the votes cast.

e. Election of Chair of the Salary & Fringe Benefit Committee

Nominees: Elizabeth Adams (AHP)

Lyudmila Rachek (COM)

Botros Rizk (COM)

No additional nominees.

Elizabeth Adams was elected with a majority of the votes cast.

f. Election of Chair of the Evaluation Committee

Nominees: Patsy Turnipseed (Educ)

No additional nominees.

Elected unanimously.

g. Election of Chair of Academic Development & Mentoring

Nominees: Phil Carr (A&S)

No additional nominees.

Elected unanimously.

h. Election of Chair of Planning & Development

Nominees: Jack Shelly-Tremblay (A&S)

No additional nominees.

Elected unanimously

i. Election of Chair of Policy & Handbook

Nominees: Sam Fisher (A&S)

No additional nominees.

Elected unanimously.

j. Election of Chair of Environmental Quality

Nominees: Douglas Marshall

No additional nominees.

Elected unanimously.

6. Committee Reports

- Academic Development and Mentoring (Phil Carr)

In looking at the committee's charge, we realized the charge was not what the committee actually did. We spent the year re-writing the mission of the committee. We had questions regarding mentoring added to the annual faculty survey and have surveyed the Deans regarding mentoring on campus.

- Environmental Quality (Doug Haywick)

The committee is still pushing campus-wide recycling. We are hopeful that the dining hall will have a proper recycling facility. We have also received inquiries regarding single stream recycling; those inquiries have been passed on to the Facility Manager. We have worked with the University on bio-diesel proposals – refining University waste into diesel. We also address

excess paper issues, particularly the Mid-Week Memo, the A&S Annual Report, and the research Innovation & Outreach Report.

- Evaluation (Amy Prendergast)

The main charge of the committee is to administer the faculty survey. This year we divided the survey into 2 sections. Part I dealt with University Leadership & Professional Development. That section had 475 responses. Part II dealt with university services and received 397 responses. Committee is currently preparing the annual report for web posting.

- Planning and Development (Sheryl Falkos) - sent via email
- Policies and Faculty Handbook (Sam Fisher)

Worked on the student grade grievance policy and the copyright policy. This year the Chair also worked on the University technology committee looking into alternatives to ECollege; the University could save hundreds of thousands of dollars by changing providers. At the university-level, the committee looked at lecture capture systems.

- Salary and Benefits (Julie Estis) – sent via email
- Technology Utilization (Tom Meyer) – no end of the year report received.

7. Caucus Reports

- Allied Health (Elizabeth Adams)

Currently revising tenure/promotion guidelines

- Arts and Sciences (Thomas Shaw)

Met with the Dean regarding tech support in the classroom. The Dean was very receptive to faculty ideas.

- Continuing Education (Vickie McCormick) – No report
- Computer and Information Sciences (David Langan) – No report
- Education (Dennis Campbell)

COE is still merging the special education and elementary education programs.

- Engineering (Peter Byrne)- no report
- Library (Vera Finley)

Carol Ellis has been appointed as the Director of the Archives

- Mitchell College of Business (Donna Retzlaff-Roberts)

MCOB is moving a number of classes to hybrid for fall; currently looking for an accounting instructor.

- Medicine (_____) - no report
- Nursing (Diane Keasler)

All undergraduate courses will be hybrid in the fall. The Baldwin campus will host the accelerated program. The traditional program will move to main campus.

Ad Hoc Committee for Constitutional Reform:

Haywick, Carr, Shaw, Spector, Rishka, Dardeau

Homecoming Ad hoc Committee

Byrd, Martinko, Keasler, D. Turnipseed, Moore, Finley, Nero

Additional Discussion:

Following the regular reports, J. Connors provided insight into his plans for the 2010-2011 Faculty Senate and asked for input from the members present:

J. Connors noted that he is serious about making our lives more like we anticipated when we entered academia. He has arranged to meet with David Johnson at least once each month. In their first meeting, J. Connors told VP Johnson that faculty are being asked to do more without additional compensation or reward. The faculty is working with the administration during this difficult time and the administration needs to find a way to reward the effort or the faculty is likely to disengage.

D. Haywick asked that the issue of 9-month faculty being required to provide services over the summer without compensation needs to be addressed. Some departments are *requiring* 9-month faculty to come in on their own time; others (including administration) *expect* 9-month faculty to be available (summer committee meetings, etc.)

B. Lunsford asked that support for research be discussed. The University is cutting its support and those who are not tenured have to go to conferences and have to publish to remain with the University. If the University continues to cut research funding, it is going to negatively impact non-tenured faculty's chances of success.

Another member noted that if we are going to be a "research institution," there must be support for research. If the University is going to cease its research funding/support, the decision should be made to scrap the graduate programs and become a 4-year teaching school. In response, J. Connors noted he would like Russ Lea to address the Senate. R. Lea is pushing for changes on the research front.

Another member questions support for technology and the need for new equipment. A member of COE noted that the member's computer is dated and simply will not work with some of the programs that need to be used. A member of the CIS faculty noted that his computer is six years old; so the problem is campus-wide.

J. Connors noted that he can raise the problems, but the Senate needs to come up with solutions and bring those solutions to the table. We can't just bring problems.

On a similar note, members need to continue to think of ways to help the University save money. The University talks about saving energy but half of the lights on campus are on all night.

J. Shelley-Tremblay suggested the Senate discuss the pros/cons of changing the Senate's constitution and the need for balance between stability and flexibility. Members need more information, particularly information on the culture of governance – the both what is the culture and how did the culture become established. For example, the University itself has a very high internal promotion rate, yet there is a sharp divide between upper administrators and the chairs. Most departments appear to be democratic; but administration – both at the college & University levels -- tends to be autocratic.

J. Connors noted that the faculty historically has not pushed back against the autocratic decision-making. As a result, the administration does not take the faculty seriously. For example, the now defunct Mississippi Gulf Coast Campus effort – the faculty didn't even know about it, much less have input into it. At the Trustees meeting with the MGCC effort was put to a vote, no financials were shown or discussed. One trustee asked about the finances and was told the campus would be revenue-neutral. There was no other discussion and no support for the proposition provided.

G. Dardeau added that USA has had strong Faculty Senates in the past, but administration can count on change; we have no continuity. She noted that when D. Haywick was president of the Senate, there was a focus on communication with the Senate and to the colleges. D. Haywick noted communication is still an issue; the Senate can't provide the faculty with information when we don't receive it from the administration.

D. Haywick also noted that each University Committee is supposed to have at least one Faculty Senate representative. The committee lists needs to be reviewed and J. Connors needs to nominate a member for each committee. D. Haywick noted that he has been listed as the Faculty Senate representative on a committee *for years*, even during periods when he was not on Senate.

K. Woodford asked that the caucuses meet and elect a caucus leader for 2010-2011. The results of the caucus election should be sent to the new secretary, Julie Estis.

Adjourned 4:20 p.m.